

Testimony in Opposition of *HB 5193*  
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My name is Matthew Simmons. I am 30 years old, and I am Transgendered. No one would want to wake up in the wrong body on a daily basis. That is what it is like to be transgendered. When I came out as being Trans, I didn't have a lot of support. Now I have the support from my friends and family. I changed my name legally. I have been on testosterone for about 3 years and living as a man is easier. I also have had the gender marker on my driver's license changed. However, that is not enough.

Binding hasn't always been easy. When I was heavier, it was very hard to hide my breasts. Losing weight has made binding easier. I don't want to just live and think like a man. This Friday, I will be getting a double mastectomy and chest reconstruction. Once I fully heal, I will have the chest of a man. No more binding, and no more wearing layers to hide my chest. I will be another step closer in my transformation.

Words cannot even begin to describe just how happy I am that this surgery is covered by my insurance: Medicaid. I have mental illnesses as well as some physical conditions which make it next to impossible for me to hold a job. I have very low income, so I rely on my insurance to get the care I need. River Valley Services, a state agency, is extremely helpful. Connecticut Valley Hospital and River Valley Services have been very supportive of me and also of my transition.

I am really excited about my upcoming surgery. I have wanted this procedure done for many years. Thanks to Medicaid covering the surgery, I can look forward to having a body that matches how I feel. Before the new law mandating all insurance companies to cover gender reassignment surgeries, I thought I would never be able to afford the surgery. Before the new law, these procedures were thought of as cosmetic. To the transgendered, the surgery is necessary and lifesaving. If this law was changed, and my insurance didn't cover the surgery, it would be devastating for me. Please do not change this law. Knowing that insurance does cover our surgeries is life changing. Please don't take away this wonderful opportunity from us. Please keep the law the way it is now.

Thank you,  
Matthew James Alexander Simmons